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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 000119

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/19/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [AJ](#)  
SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN: WEBSITE DETAINEE RELEASED AFTER YOUTH  
MINISTER'S INTERVENTION

REF: A. BAKU 89

[1](#)B. BAKU 102

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Jason P. Hyland for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Police arrested and briefly detained Bakhtiyar Hajiyeu January 13 after Hajiyeu had set up a website ([www.susmayaq.biz](http://www.susmayaq.biz)) on January 9 that enabled citizens to sign a web-based petition objecting to the GOAJ's recent price hike (ref a). In a January 18 meeting with poloff, Hajiyeu reported that police arrested him at a downtown internet cafe where he was attempting to access his website. (Note: The site was and remains blocked to internet users within Azerbaijan; users outside of Azerbaijan continue to have access to it.) Hajiyeu said he was taken to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) Organized Crime Unit (OCU) and briefly questioned about his activities. He reported that police then took him to the Narimanov district court where a judge sentenced him to 12 days detention for resisting arrest, a charge Hajiyeu denied.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Hajiyeu's friends sought the help of the Council of Europe, OSCE Baku, the US and UK Embassies. According to Hajiyeu, Farhad Hajiyeu (no relation), a senior advisor to Minister of Youth and Sports Azad Rahimov, found out about the detention January 14 and prevailed on Rahimov to seek the intervention of the Presidential Apparatus. On January 15, a Baku appellate court overturned the lower court's decision and released him. Shortly thereafter, Rahimov invited Hajiyeu to meet with him.

[1](#)3. (C) Separately, on January 19 the Ambassador expressed USG concern over Hajiyeu's arrest and the website's blockage to Minister of Communications and Information Technology Abbasov. Abbasov agreed that closing the website was the wrong decision and said that he would raise the matter with the President Aliyev. The Ambassador also raised Hajiyeu's arrest and blockage of the website with Foreign Minister Mammadyarov, who characterized both as "a mistake" (ref. b).

[1](#)4. (C) Hajiyeu, a computer science graduate student and self-described Ilham Aliyev supporter, was visibly shocked by his arrest and detention. He said that he did not think anyone in the GOAJ would feel threatened by a public petition. Hajiyeu confided that this episode led him to conclude that that it was potentially dangerous to participate in politics in Azerbaijan. The swift intervention by other GOAJ officials to secure Hajiyeu's release suggests that Hajiyeu was indeed well known and regarded by other GOAJ officials, who appear to have been caught unaware by his arrest. (Hajiyeu said that Minister Rahimov told him he did not know who had ordered the arrest.) Hajiyeu's site ([www.susmayaq.biz](http://www.susmayaq.biz)) and another website ([www.tinsohbeti.com](http://www.tinsohbeti.com)) popular for lampooning GOAJ officials remain blocked within

Azerbaijan.  
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